

THROUGH HUMAN EYES



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Through Human Eyes



Through Human Eyes

P O E M S

BY

A. BUCKTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY POEM

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

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ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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To ANNET
WHO PROVED ME THAT THE HUMAN HEART HAS
NEITHER AGE NOR NATIONALITY, AND
THEREBY MADE ME FREE OF
THE WORLD

*This volume is a reprint of one of the strictly limited
issues from the press of the Rev. C. H. Daniel, of
Oxford, with seven pieces added. "The Victor"
is here reprinted by kind permission of
the Editor of "The Speaker."*

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Introductory

The Singer speaks :—

*Along the meadows
Lightly going,
With worship and joy
My heart o'erflowing,*

*Far from town
And toil of living,
To a holy day
My spirit giving. . .*

*Thou tender flower,
I kneel beside thee,
Wondering why God
So beautified thee.*

*An answering thought
Within me springeth:
A bloom of the mind
Her vision bringeth:*

*Between the dim hills'
Distant azure
And flowery foreground
Of sparkling pleasure*

*I see the company
Of figures sainted,
For whom the picture
Of earth was painted,*

*Those robéd seers
Who made man's story
The crown of Nature,
Her cause his glory.*

*They walk in the city
Which they have builded,
The city of God
From evil shielded:*

*To them for canopy
The vault of heaven,
The flowery earth
For carpet is given;
Whereon I wander
Not unknowing,
With worship and joy
My heart o'erflowing.*



To a Robin

On a November Evening

SING, Robin! sing upon the blackened
bough!

O sing thy song of tearless ecstasy,
And strike thy courage, ere the winter blow,
Into the quailing heart of Misery,
That dare not plead his thin and tattered coat,
Where thou, sweet Singer of the hidden Sun,
Dost fill the empty air with thy wild note,
The challenge of thy slender clarion!
No fool to fostered dreams and fallacies
That what the mortals mar the gods will mend,
Unmoved thou seëst round thee lying low
The ruin of thy summer palaces,
And on into the darkness singest thou,
Sure of the far, the undelaying end!

On Hearing a Certain Overture

Two notes, my lord ! no more !
But pain spoke through their pallid lips
That left us speechless . . .

WHAT moan is this of elemental Sound
That gathers in some undiscovered
Deep

Of being, spreading dumb dismay around ?
As if some spirit, sighing underground,
Did turn himself upon his bed, and weep,
Bewailing still, in anguish comfortless,
The dark and irremediable wound,
To which no penitence can bring redress.
Is it thy voice, O Master ? thou, whose tongue
And touch have loosened Titan melodies,
And left the lyre of passion fully strung ?
Whose ear, attuned to stormy harmonies,
The secret of one simple chord did miss,
The measure of the tears of human bliss !

Old Yule Night :

On Hearing a Distant Horn.

THE Horn again ! again !
In the winter night,
When stars are bright,
It shakes the frozen pane :
The banner waves upon the rood,
It stirs a Sire's forgotten blood,
And starts the sullen vein :
It lifts the dog's ear breathlessly,
He moans, and listens restlessly—
The Horn ! again ! again !

Follow ! follow !
O'er hill and hollow,
Where never deer was ta'en !
By vale and wood,
O'er stream and flood,
Give back the phantom strain !
The mellow mouth is deep and worn,
And dim the carving round the Horn
Where mighty hands have lain,

Courting the agèd finger-tips,—
Sound it aloud with trembling lips!
The Horn! again! again!

The cry is up,
The heart is up,
And longeth to be gone :
For heroes ride to meet the morn,
And with them rides great Odin's son!
With thundering hoof and streaming mane
He gathers warriors to his train ;
Breathe hard and fast,
The Night is past,
And melts upon the plain!

Under the Dawn
The boats are drawn
Down from the flashing beach,
In the tossing line
Of the foamy brine,
With a golden prow to each,
And the glittering light of helm and spear
And the sounding cry of a mighty cheer
To greet the Sun
And the Day begun,
Or e'er the god appear!

But what is he
That rides with me
And clogs my bridal rein?
Thicker, fleeter,
Faster, sweeter,
The Horn! again! again! . . .
It faints, it fails, it dies away,
To join the far, the bright affray,
Leaving the heart forlorn
For the faded light and the vanished dawn
Of that immortal Day!

The Scandinavians associated Yule-Tide with the rising of the sun at the Winter Solstice: celebrating the return of the Bright-haired Sun-God with fires and festivities.

The Maid at the Wayside Inn

STRAIGHT in her bed she lay
At close of day,
All still and white,
As the winter's light
Faded away.

Silent the tender tongue
That, sweet and strong,
Delayed the ear :
Is no one here
To miss the song?

Has never a lover presst
This gentle breast
And sown unchid,
On lip and lid
The sweet unrest,

Bringing a faint new fear
Of summer near,
And made thy name
To blush with fame?
O child ! had I been here !

The Song Celestial

I.

THERE is a Song, could I but give it
breath,

That flows all day into my mouth and eyes,
That maketh music in the house of death

And toucheth sorrow, careless of disguise,
To break aloud in streaming melody,

Up-leaping like a fountain, blinding pure,
To still the spirit in its agony,

And keep its moaning low, with sense
secure.

II.

There is a kingdom born in every lot,

An equal joy to measure every care,
Could tongue but tell it out : but tongue can
not,

And uttered words are emptier than air :
For neither sign, nor sound, nor form of speech

To man's untutored spirit can convey
What all must learn at last, and none may
teach,

Tho' moons grow dim, and systems pass
away.

III.

And so I fall a-singing all alone ;
And singing cease ; and ceasing, catch
again,
In sky-born echoes, dropping one by one,
The Song Celestial without a pain,
Like gleams at sunrise of a passing shower
That saves itself against another day !
Oh, when we need thee, in the darker hour,
Sweet Voice of singing, be not far away !

Palmistry

In Kensington Gardens

A CHILD'S hand, a dimpled hand,
Laid on its mother's knee
All carelessly :
Short and stout, of lusty make
Framed for imperative demand
For some one's sake !

O little hand
That thoughtfully I take,
What curious fate is thine ?
What must thou do,
And what unmake,
Of old or new,
Of evil deeds or fine ?

I see this little palm prepare
In every act to bless or ban,
And even now, to greatly dare
The full-grown passion of a man,

To mar or mend,
To strike and sway,
To lead astray,
Or guide the fallen friend :
To give the kingly praise and blame,
And oh ! perchance a higher deed—
To hide the face, for very need,
And grace of mortal shame !

The Victor

A Bronze by D— McG—

AND is it thus to be a victor? thou
With sunken knee, in strange dejection
cast,

The laurel drooping from thy pallid brow,
Thy naked shoulder shuddering at the blast
That trumpets forth thy deed with brazen
breath?

Is life itself more difficult than death?
Or is't the thought of him that thou hast slain—
So little less in valour than thyself—
That sickens thee at sight of yonder pelf,
The piteous recompense of mortal pain?
Or, trancèd memory of a dying glance
That, fading, robbed thee of one victory
That ne'er shall be—thy last and only chance
To make thy friend that was thine enemy?

Alone

SWAY, sway, tops of the trees
Under the stars so white :
Cradle my soul in your branches wet,
And carry me there till the moon shall set
Just for to-night !

Sigh, sigh, sound of the breeze,
Lifting my bed so light :
Lace my head in a dreamless net,
And kiss my tears, that I may forget,
Just for to-night !

Love's Extremity

LOVE is the only unsubduèd thing,
That knoweth neither slavery nor woe,
Yet dares himself in subjugation bring
To serve the lightest circumstance : but oh,
The sun is dark in heaven, and the stars
Rush forth in weeping course upon their doom,
When Love must seem not that he is, and mars
His fairest parts to build himself a tomb ;
Lest, like a beggar starving by the way,
He suffer gentle pity—worse than death !—
Accept a lower homage, and betray
His priceless kingdom for a fading wreath.
Imperishable, still, he lives to be
His bitter friend and constant enemy !

Passing

PLAY, play, wild wet wind,
Stringing with tears the grey November bough
 Play in my hair,
And cool the fevered cheek
Too hot with summer's glow :
 Thy chilly tears
I would be weeping now.

Summer is over : spent hangs the rose
 Over its garden bed,
 Drenched with dew :
The air is full of a homeless sound,
The rushing forth of a soul unbound,
 Whither—no man knows !
And yet the darkened way it goes
 I would be going too.

The bare leaf beats against the sky,
 Its slender will outdone :
Soon will it fall to its earthy bed
 In a soundless sleep :
 Cover my head—
I would be sleeping soon.

LOVE me and only me,
No thing of mine—
Neither my beauty, nor the praise of it,
My riches, poverties, or very love !
Forget them all, indeed, if any be,
Love me, and only me :
And know not why,
Only that thou dost need me for thyself,
Pleading for thine own sake, and not for mine,
As I love thee, of great necessity !
Can love be dowerless that naked woo'd ?
Ah, he was ever rich that never loved !

Circlet

IF I had known, as now I know,
That fairest Summer cometh late,
I ne'er had felt the winter slow.
If I had known as now I know
That rarest vineyards ripen so!
And had I found it light to wait,
I ne'er had known, as now I know,
That fairest Summer cometh late!

Song

TELL-TALE lips of joy, where did ye sup
to-night?

The Eye for reaping beauty's ground,
The Ear for sifting lovely sound,
But Lips to prove
The food of Love—
Love that liketh well!

The watchful Eye and needy Ear
Lay wait for many a messenger
To carry the world's delight ;
The Tongue for taste, and the Nostril fine
For thieving scents of rose and vine ;
But O, th' adventurous Lips fulfil
Their own behest, and dearest will!
And Love is brought,
And Love is caught,
In one sweet spell!

Sonnets of Art

I.

To the Amateur

HAPPY the man that loves! I speak not
now
Of Life, and that diviner mystery,
But of a milder love, whose even flow
Deepens with ageing life's intensity ;
A love for all things made by the hand of man,
Dumb pictures of the living mind within,
That lovers, passing, pause awhile to scan
In soul-delighted silence—knowing therein
Man's uttermost—feeling, thought, and tone
Nursed in a dream, but rarely looked upon—
Slaking the delicate thirst on honeyed wine,
The choicest brew that mortal blossoms make—
Rapture of roses, and the strong sea-brine—
Blessing the maker for the Creature's sake!

Sonnets of Art

II.

To the Maker

BUT happier the creator! he that knows,
Beyond all men, the daily jar and fret—
The pang of indefinable regret—
The heavenly Vision—and the fading glows!
Others may pass, and gather from the thing
His soul hath travailed with, a day's delight:
But none shall feel, as he hath felt, the sting
Of every blemish in his Art's despite;
Or know the soundless joy, the sudden awe,
As his own child he standeth dumb before,
As were it not his own! but something born
Out of the far-off, dim-arriving Dawn,
To set, for one short hour, his trembling feet
Upon the heights where God and manhood
meet!

Soul-Gazing

IN those round worlds, your eyes, I see
Countries belonging unto me,
And to another, far behind,
That, pond'ring still, I may not find—
A Dweller in the depths alone,
That looketh forth unseen, unknown,
Into Immensity!

Dear Love! you drop your lids awhile,
As shy with meeting but a smile
A question half-express'd!
I will not ask—nor e'en refrain;
Only lift up your eyes again,
And let me join my soul in them, and
rest!

Sappho Disdained*

BRIGHT-HAIRED Aphrodite,
Queen of the coloured throne,
Weaver of the wiles of lovers!
Come, O come!

My spirit breaks with anguish,
My body lieth wan,
Spent with tears of grief and anger,
Nigh over-worn.

Come, as once thou camest,
From thy Father's House,
Hither drawn with fleetest flappings
Of thy golden doves.

As they drew from heaven,
Darkening half the earth,
Sudden comfort came upon me—
Sudden shame at grief.

* Compare the Greek.

Thou, O Blessed! askedst
Low, with laughing eyes—
Pardoned only in th' Immortals—
“Wherefore weepest thou?”

“Who hath wronged thee, Sappho?
Who hath given thee grief?
Where the lovely maid that, living,
Scorns thy gifts and thee?”

“Follow, though she fly thee;
She shall yield to wooing,
And, rejecting gifts to-day,
Shall soon be giving,—

“Yea, and sighing for thee!”
Child of Zeus appear!
Be again my heart's ally,
And perfect counsellor!

Under the Wall

OVERHEAD the Mimosa bloom
Sways in the Sun :
Trembling joy in his myriad leaves
Lifts the blossom, that sighs and heaves
For love of one.

One that shall come this way, and pass
Under the wall,
With the tranquil blue of Summer skies,
And the mirror of love in the open eyes,
Beholding all !

Dust of bloom and golden seed,
Floating down,
Empty low like incense showers
All the love of the burning flowers—
Low for one !

Quickly come, O quickly come !
The hour is late !
The shadow sleeps on the dial-face,
And the hush of noon-day keeps the place
Where Love doth wait.

The Heart Comfortless

SPRING everywhere
Shoots through the air
With golden glance of Sun and rain :
Crocuses like fire,
Warm with desire,
Breaking the earth,
Flash answer back again :
The while in heavenly mirth,
From brake and briar,
The yellow thrush and linnet sing
“ No joy like that of spring ! ”

Day follows day,
Golden and gray,
And still the gray is gathered in the gold :
Fold upon fold
Blossoms are shed,
Loosing their hold
In dear desire to be accomplished.
Last in the train,
Sighing in vain,
Wan for his summer, the heart maketh moan
Crying alone
Of all things that sing,
“ No grief, no grief like that of Spring ! ”

My Lady's Cup-bearer

TO lie beneath one equal roof,
To meet at morn her limpid eyes,
To touch her hand at every meal,
Methought were Paradise!

I asked too little, or too much!
The gods, with matchless irony,
Granted the prayer of ignorance,
And gave me—misery.

Song

GENTLY comes the breath of love
To all of gentle mind :
But oh, the bitter winds are felt
The more unkind !

The open hand, the honest heart
Invite the fairest morrow,
But oh, the wider gates of love
Let in the deeper sorrow !

And yet, though Grief be very twin
To Love, oh, who would dare
To shut the portals of his heart,
And live without a care ?

At Her Bier

TWO hands together folded—
Two lids shut low—
Two lips upon each other,
Companions now,
Needing on earth again
No playfellow!

Dear Breast, where night and day
My head hath lain,
Dear Voice that answers not
To mine again,
Dark—dark for evermore
To joy and pain—

More tender than young lilies
Blowing pale,
More secret than the perfume
Of the vale,
Imperious as the sounding
Of the gale—

I shall not fail to meet you—
 Gathering far—
For oh ! the thing that made you
 What you are
Will draw me worshipping
 To every star !

A Child's Dower

A CHEEK that oft my cheek caressed ;
Immeasurable warmth of Breast ;
Enfolding Arms : a quiet Voice
Whose silence frightened every noise ;
The Vision of a form at night,
White-footed, bending, robed in white :
A Christmas hymn : a certain glade
Where Bluebells carpeted the shade !
A book of Heroes : and a Nest
With five blue dazzling eggs at rest :
A little gutta-percha Boy
That played the king in every joy :
A Dog's brown eyes : a Windlass well—
These are the things that cast a spell,
Greater than all Romance can own,
On all I since have seen and known !

Robin in Autumn

NOW Robin sings the dim day long
And pipes his intermittent song
In all the woods forsaken,
In ways where lovers used to meet,
And laughing sounds of echoing feet
That come no more, till Summer sweet
The world to wonder waken!

Dear to the pensive Heart and proud,
Bird of inimitable mood!
Art thou with thy clear singing!
Some tear unshed behind thy note
Controls the tempest in thy throat,
And shakes thy tiny feathered coat,
And sets the man-heart ringing!

No hint of suff'ring have I heard
Betray thee yet, dear heedless Bird,
Though Winter followed after;
Under the hedge's broken pile
Thou hid'st thy head a little while,
To greet the first, the faintest smile
With sound of living laughter!

Then and Now

OF old I loved the Autumn days,
Dishevelled gardens, reft of store,
But trees discrowned, and leafless ways,
I love not any more!

The broken gleams, the winds that rise
Assail my soul with aching :
For now the drifting trees and skies
Are all of my own making.

My heart is bare of mirth and pride,
The fields are bare of sheaves,
And tears, like rain, on every side
Are falling from the leaves.

Disillusion

I.

O GIVE me touch of thee, or any sense
To bring thee back, fled Vision of my
heart !

To this, the twilight of my garden, whence
Thou didst at dawn so cruelly depart.
All day with angry gauds I filled thy place :
But now, with tears washed pure of rivalry,
I keep it bare, lest haply thy sweet face
Revisit it in hours of reverie.
For every joy that lived with thee is dead ;
And like to early blighted blossoms shed
Around a gnarlèd trunk, forlorn and bare,
The fruitless flowers of my Summer lie,
And cannot live again ! O let me die,
Or lose all memory of what ye were !

II.

Yet, unto me was given the happier lot :
A lesser loss than All I could not bear !

Had I, in grief, provoked the hectic spot
Upon thy cheek, or, on thy forehead fair,
The sudden shadow of a dim distrust,
I had embittered all I have of sweet,
And left a bald and broken shrine, that must
For evermore have drawn my beggared feet.
For ever may I pilgrim now to thee,
And move to worship in that charmèd spot,
For ever picture me thy perfect mien,
And—as thou fadest in obscurity—
Awake to know that thou hast never been—
Ah! to my widowed heart, this day art not!

Tulip-Flames

TULIP-FLAMES in all my border
Stand arow—
Tulips red their goblets lifting
All aglow !
Tulips, pale as heart a-flaming,
Burning slow !

Sacrificial in my garden,
They to me
Speak of all the fulness offered
Unto Thee,
Waiting till one day thou, careless,
Turn and see !

Vanishings

THE Spirit passeth by,
The glories fade,
That but an hour since
Thy pleasure made.
The golden blossom trained
About thy bower,
That decked the dazzling noon
With many a flower,
Is wilted now, and wan
Within the shade ;
“ The spirit passeth by,
The glories fade ! ”

Upon the Autumn fields
The shadows fall ;
The chilly twilight steeps
And covers all ;
And in the dying West,
Dismantling skies,

The very far-off home
 Of wistful eyes,
Are fading, fading fast
 On vale and hill—
O unpersuaded Heart,
 Why linger still?

The noon will not return,
 The day is dead :
The blossom of the hour
 Is vanishèd.
Why wander idly down
 The empty lane,
And press from every thorn
 Its drop of pain,
And stretch thy hands to keep
 The parting scene,
Marring the happy grace
 Of what hath been?

Let go the gentle touch
 Of dying things,
Nor bid the bird repeat
 The song it sings,
For nothing lives again!
 But Life, to thee

The hourly child of Life,
For this shall be
More purely worshippèd,
More meek obeyed :—
“The spirit passeth by,
And glories fade!”

TO dare to own oneself, to recognize
The viewless peaks and ancient boundaries
Of our dominion, and know them set—
And in the near and farther provinces
To rule with equal temper, this is Life!

The Alien

A Picture

HER loosened tresses, dark and long,
Upon her naked shoulder hung,
And shadowed half her cheek
With airy curls of tender growth,
That seemed to tremble at her mouth,
As if her lips did speak,

And they held secret converse there :—
Oh, is it fancy, or a prayer
That holds her thus in trance?
Or dreams she of some other place,
Of whispered vow, and bended face
In sunny far Provence?

To —

I KNEW thee not—and marvelled as I
dreamed.

No image of thy being had I known ;
Yet everything that fair and lovely seemed
Withdrew itself to thy removed throne !
To thy fair throne removed, it waited there,
Till Love should get his manly eyes to see
The stormy way his wilful course must bear,
To bring my destined spirit home to thee !
For, true in instinct, as a bird untaught,
The careless Soul, in either's heart and breast,
Had built itself an answer to its thought,
And gathered thither surely to its rest.
Had either to his dream been less than true,
Our nameless search had long begun anew !

Evening Bells

PLAY on, sweet bells ! My fevered soul
The old familiar charm obeys,
And sinks to rest,
As lightly as a tired child,
That leans its happy weary head
Upon its mother's breast !

Sweet bells, ring on !
In golden twilight over garnered fields,
And silent woods, and solemn evening skies,
Above the summer bleat of folded lambs,
And, from the village green, the children's cries.

With waves invisible
Flow over all things, and subdue all thought
To one low undertone :
And like the hush of closing choirs
In full cathedral aisles,
Cease unaware
Upon the air,
And leave the spirit worshipping alone.

Purification

BLUE—blue—overhead,
The very swallows gone!
And in the blue
A little cloud,
That takes my soul
A-sailing on and on.

Tire not, wistful eyes!
Weary mouth,
Send your breath
Up to waft
The airy raft
That takes my soul a-sailing!

Sail long, blessèd cloud!
With thy burden tender,
On, till thou art all dissolved
In the endless blue,
And my spirit falls again,
Through the heavens, silently,
Born anew!

The Great Response

LET me come nearer Thee,
O Perfect Soul !

Down-looking on me, wheresoe'er I tread,
With earnest gaze from earth, and sky o'erhead,
From clustered flowers, and leaves, and bowers
of green—

Let me come nearer Thee !

Seeking thine intercourse
I wander wide

O'er hills and valleys, under moon and stars,
Rapt in a secret tumult of delight
At every passing cloud, and changing light
On stream and mountain side.

I kiss thy cheek, fair rose !

Its pearly hue
Reflects the darker passion blood of mine :
Thy tender breath, responding to the lips,
Is sweeter to the soul than new-made wine.

Young veinèd leaf uncurled,
And tendril green,
Clinging about my finger slenderly,
Thou seëst not : what wouldst thou have of me?
What happy sense hast thou, to know the touch
Of the unseen ?

Blue dome of heaven that holds
The living world
Like a green gem within a casket rare,
Fretted with brooks, and set in silver seas,
What Breast contains ye both, the moving Earth
And the free Air ?

And lo ! within my soul
Some happy Thing
Betrayed the secret sigh of deep content :
And, from the hollows of the breathless hills
There came a quiet Voice : Look round on Me,
The Presence, the Desire that all things fills,
The whole—the part !

I rise upon the winds :
I draw the stars
Thro' realms of night, on paths of trackless
thought :

Mine Eye contains the light of Day : mine Arm
Unfurls the cloud, and flings the grateful shade
Unmasked—untaught.

In glimmering regions, yet unborn,
I penetrate
The Abyss of Being, and the Springs of
Thought :
I order things that be : and blamelessly
Divide the heavens and earth, reprov'd of
nought,
Of Joy and Power, insatiate !

I linger in the twilight land of Grief :
With health divine
Breathing on frozen hearts that know me not ;
They lift their marred and chilly lips to me,
Swooning into my bosom dreamlessly,
For Grief and Death are mine !

I gather up the fleeting souls that seem
All day to die :
Their beauty, melting, passeth not away.
Withdrawn into the golden mist of Life,
They 'merge again upon the seething strife,
That worketh endlessly !

And man, the fairest of my children! thou
That battlest madly with thy destiny—
Whom I did make for joy and liberty—
And fain had lifted up to be with me,
My Son and fellow-worker—know

I ONLY AM : unhasting, uncontrolled,
My Perfect Will
Fulfil its perfect Self, around, above.
My holy name is One! O Mortal, yield
Unto the soul that would thy being fill—
The Soul of Love!

Eleanora Duse

DEAR Woman of thy kind! was this thy
lot,

To paint for men the darkness and the grief—
The human prelude to divine relief—
The cry for that which comes—and still is not?
Ah God! those mournful eyes, with silence
fraught—

Dumb sounds—quick murmurs, low and pitiful—
Soft hands reluctant—movements wonderful—
Feeling for life, and joy, as one untaught. . . .
What would the world not give, that sees in thee
Itself made eloquent, itself made great,
Most understood in its mortal fate,
And cry for liberty—but once to see
That Brow illuminate beyond distress,
That smile dissolve in love's own happiness!

Winter

SHARP Winter! Bonny Winter!
Challenge the lusty Year
To shew so bright array
As thou dost here
With holly-berries, mistletoe, and yew!

Or, folded in thy cloak,
Standing at dusk alone,
Hearing the bitter wind
Make endless moan
Between a sullen sky and snowy plain,

Smile to thyself, and keep
Thy darling secret—this—
The Thing thou carryest
The promise is
And pledge of every summer-day to be!

Sharp Winter! Bonny Winter!
Challenge the lusty Year
To shew such ruddy cheeks
And inner cheer
As make thy bitter winds and darkest days!

An Altered Chart

THE agèd World, with wrinkled face and
breast,

O'er-scarred and furrowed with the rain of tears,
The heat and sun-burn of her giant years,
Abateth little of her youthful zest :
But lovely still, deceiving with decay,
In furtive mist she veils the crumbling cape,
And ships go by, nor see the changing shape,
Or where the samphire clings from day to day :
Till, in the glitter of a tideless bay,
There leaps a livid crack across the land,
The spue of fiery lips upon the sand,
And, smoking with the breath of burning snow,
The citied Coast-line vanishes—and lo,
A virgin isle a thousand miles away !

In Memoriam

R. L. N. 1892.

ON the dim snow-height
Storm-encompassèd,
His soul passed out for ever,
Spirit-led!

Name not the quiet smile
For ever still,
The broken years he never
May fulfil!

Ye that have known the touch
Of that dead hand,
Who may approach my grief,
Or understand

How one, climbing alone
The silent steep,
Where once ye gathered to
His leadership,

At daybreak nearly met
In that fair place—
For evermore to miss
His Unseen Face!

The Heart Worships

SILENCE in Heaven—
Silence on Earth—
Silence within !
Thy hush, O Lord,
O'er all the world
Covers the din.

I do not fear
To speak of thee
In mortal kind :
And yet, to all
Thy Namelessness
I am not blind.

Only I need
And kneel again
Thy touch to win ;
Silence in Heaven—
Silence on Earth—
Silence within !

Mary Mother

THOU sleepest : but I wake, and watching
weep :

Too soon the hours come when thou wilt keep
Thy weary watch alone, and others sleep.

Thou art not mine ; and I must give thee soon
To those that claim thee : Earth, and Sun, and
Moon

Await thy coming, saith the prophet's rune.

So weak and friendless! Blessed, blessed me!
That such a wonder could have come to be,
That I should have the Mother-care of thee!

No other Babe has known that smile of thine,
The parted lips' inimitable line,
The laughter, gloriously free and fine!

But rimmed about the circle of those eyes
Lie folded up the thoughts that agonize—
The slumbering legend of thy destinies.

In vain with tears I strive to kiss away
Their trace, and hold thee close, and almost
 pray
The watchful night may never break to day.

Each hour tells the dawn is drawing near :
I know not what it brings, or what I fear.
And yet—I will be ready when 'tis here.

But just to-night—this dreamless head of thine,
The closing fingers delicately fine,
These baby limbs—are only God's, and mine !

A Wish

To the Child Ambrose

QUICK be thy sense to the touch of flower
and bird,
Tender thine ear to the mystic undertone
That utters heaven and earth in a single word,
Patient thy soul to learn itself alone ;
 But oh, little nameless guest sent here to
 dwell,
 And oh, little mortal friend I love so well,
Be this thy heritage here, all gifts above,
The fulness, joy—and suffering—which is Love!

The Face Unseen

THE apple-tree leans with its weight against
a sky of gold,
And the evening bat comes out from the dusk
of the wood hard by,
Shadows deepen and gather over vale and fold,
The winds arise, and rock in the restless trees,
and sigh :
But my head lies low in the window, with tears
as cold as stone,
With the sense of a child forsaken, the grief of
a child alone !

And yet I have felt it watching ; at noon it
lingers near,
With the hush of a veiled thing, that moves
withheld in a dream ;
I stretch my arms, and listen : but never a
sound I hear

And the sun goes down, and the meadows are
folded white with steam.
But under the stars I know that its eyes and
cheeks are wet ;
And it moves its passionate lips,—but I may
not see It yet !

January Rain

SUMMER is sweet :
And dim the smell
Of lilies down the dusky street
Where cottage-gardens blow :
And fair the sound of a marriage-bell
At morn : and yet I know
Nothing so near
To bring a tear
In the frozen heart and sad,
As the sound and smell of a mighty rain
That falls at eve upon the plain,
When Winter yields, consenting to be glad !

The starling whistles on the bough
The gusty twilight through :
No songster he : but his feathers wet,
Storm-ruffled, are with jewels set ;
And he turns his jetty eye
Careless and proud
Upon the cloud,
And cons the travelling sky.

And o'er the leas
A new-born breeze,
A-babbling ere his time,
Bringeth a faint delusive scent
Of poplar twigs, and primrose buds,
Deep hidden in the leafless woods
Darkened with falling rime,—
Which cannot be! yet heart's content
Is come to us again,
To us who sigh and nothing know,
Yet hush the sigh, and listen low
Hearing the solemn evening blow
With January's rain!

God's Rhyme

GOD tells a tale to those that listen
Beginning at Dawn,
When Dewdrops glisten
Bright-eyed Buds and Babes to christen
And wingèd Seeds are born !

At hush of Noon and Harvest-time,
Father and mother,
Youth and Maid,
Proudly silent, sweet and staid
Smile at each other,
Catching together
The song and the secret Rhyme !

Best of all,
Where last leaves fall,
The old man, leaning, hears
With a tirèd smile, more sweet for tears,
In the sinking Sun, and the Winter rain
In the Sob of Death, in the Night of Pain,
The Story begin again

(Made for a fresco of "the Seasons" in a National School.)

On Seeing a Fan of Marie Antoinette
in the House of a Republican Friend

WHERE is the little hand that once
controlled

This pretty coquetry of guilt and pearl,
That dared the sceptred power as lightly hold,
And led about the dance's mazy whirl,
Dreaming it could the god of Custom hurl
From the high altars of dead Royalty,
And still around its sacred symbol furl
The remnants of a people's loyalty?
Alas! this brittle toy availèd naught .
To waft aside the stench of bitter fame
From centuries of ruined hearts, distraught
Too long by grief, too savage in their shame
To dream their heirs would touch with soft
regret
The place where those young finger-tips have
met!

Greater Britons

ISLAND-NURTURED Brood of the
ancient Sea,
Safe-girdled from the primal shocks of race,
Solving in undisturbed tranquillity
Your inner sorrows, and your outward place,
To you was given, by some august decree,
The living message of a People's life,
The Faith in Being through the things that be,
The Growth that waxeth out of mellowing
strife!
Great through the destiny that gathered here
The boldest thought of far and many a land,
Great through your solitude, and great by
Prayer,
God's Matter, lo! is given into your hand,
Yours, as ye serve His Mind, by Whom ye
are—
Maker of Politics in Earth and Star!

Comrades

NO stranger thou to me ! in early days
I felt thee a companion at my side ;
Thy step, unseen, kept even pace with me
Through meadows wide !

And thou wast with me as the frozen year
Turned in his darkened course to Spring
anew,
And where the tender beeches leafed again,
Thou knewst it too !

For us amid the hum of forest ways
The giant boughs their silken shade unfurled,
And blindly in primæval nakedness
Great ferns uncurled !

By secret paths beside a tangled stream
We searched the fairy pools of waving moss ;
And plundered purple banks of violets
That knew no loss.

Or paused to listen, with suspended breath,
And instant answering of eye to eye,
In some young hazel-copse, to catch the first
Far cuckoo-cry!

Upon the Downs we chased the summer clouds
That travel furtively from glade to glade ;
And wandered down the luminously dim
Enchanted shade ;

Or ran together on the shining sands
With naked feet, and toiled the livelong day,
To laugh at last, and let the waters sweep
Our walls away!

And then, of starry fish, and limpet shell,
And rosy tamarisk, and seaweed wet,
We sat and wove us perishable crowns
With pebbles set.

And ever in my wanderings and dreams
Of all that I should ever do and be,
Upon the summit of my joy I set
A throne for thee!

The Inner Citadel.

THE first upraised look in which
Thy spirit met with mine
Assailed my long-accustomed brow
Like sudden flush of wine !

The bars and barriers fled away
That kept my spirit whole :
They gaspt to let the vision by
That passed into my soul—

Thy gentle Image, entering in,
To take, by leaveless grace,
A Citadel I had not known,
An undivined place !

And still—of all the nameless things
For which I worship thee
Is this the strangest, that thyself
Betrayed myself to me !

Mountain Saxifrage

On the Stelvio Pass

BY what divinest touch of Alchemy
Did barren rock and thin blue air combine
To build a thing so delicately fine,
Native with joy, and perfect power to be?
What force could draw the senseless atoms
nigh,
And, out of dew, and cloud, and common clay,
Compose this magically fair array—
These breathing children of the earth and sky,
Were it not e'en the same resistless grace
That weaveth fiercest elements in place;
And, mixing vaster music out of strife,
Draweth from hells below, and heavens above,
The slumbering mystery the world calls Life,
The waking Life th' adoring soul calls Love!

The Sovereign Poet

An Answer

HE sitteth not above the dust of Time,
High in the starlight of Eternity—
The Poet, Sovereign-born of every clime,
Hearing the clang of Earth a sunny chime
In far enchanted spheres!

Her sighs and tears
Of mortal rage and love, whate'er they be,
Are dear to him as God's reality :
And not a joy or sorrow can surprise,
But long hath had a home within his eyes,
The pulsings of his heart !

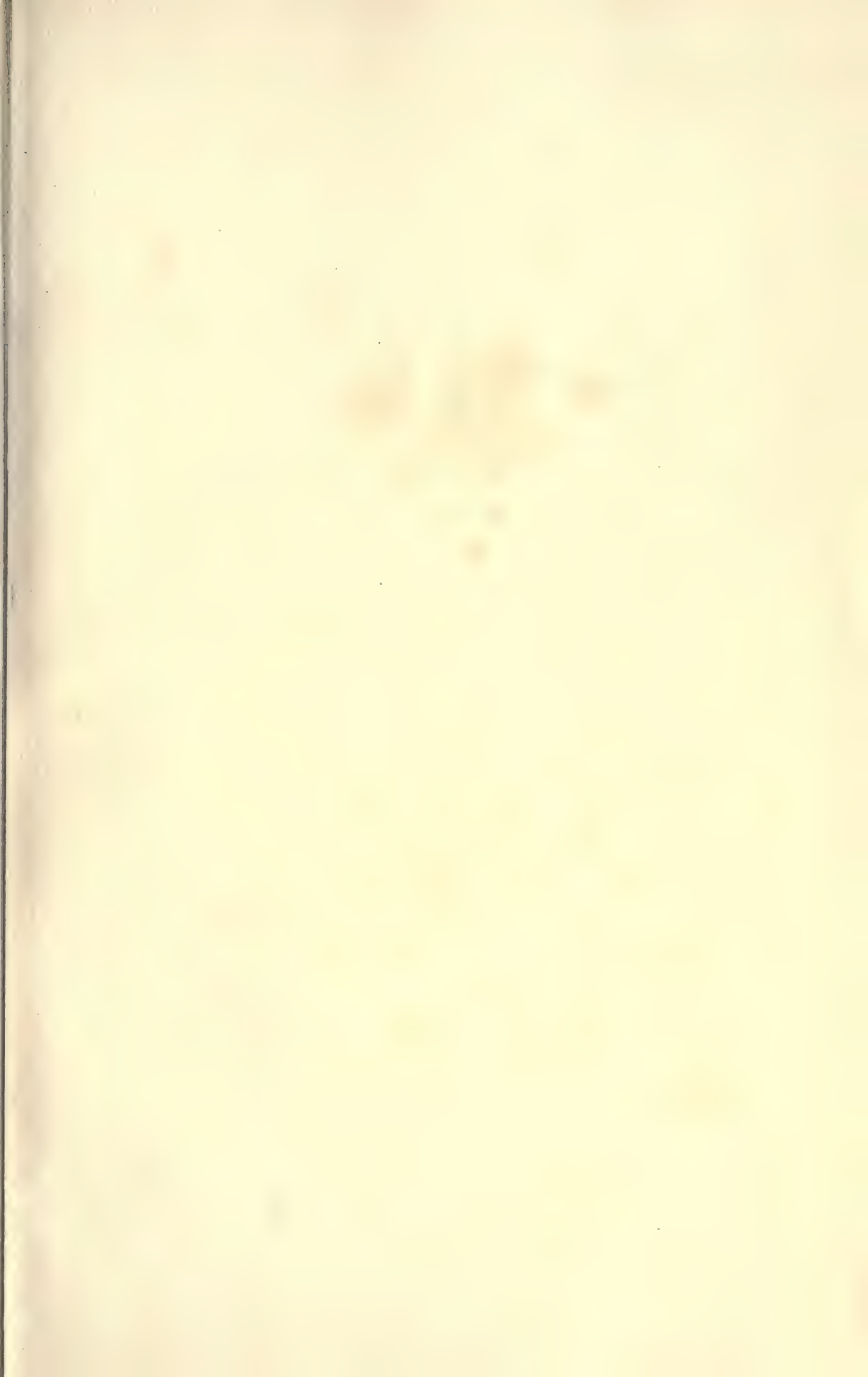
His chosen part
Is on the market place, and in the street ;
His ample stature and his careless feet
The nearest most familiar thing we know :
High and low

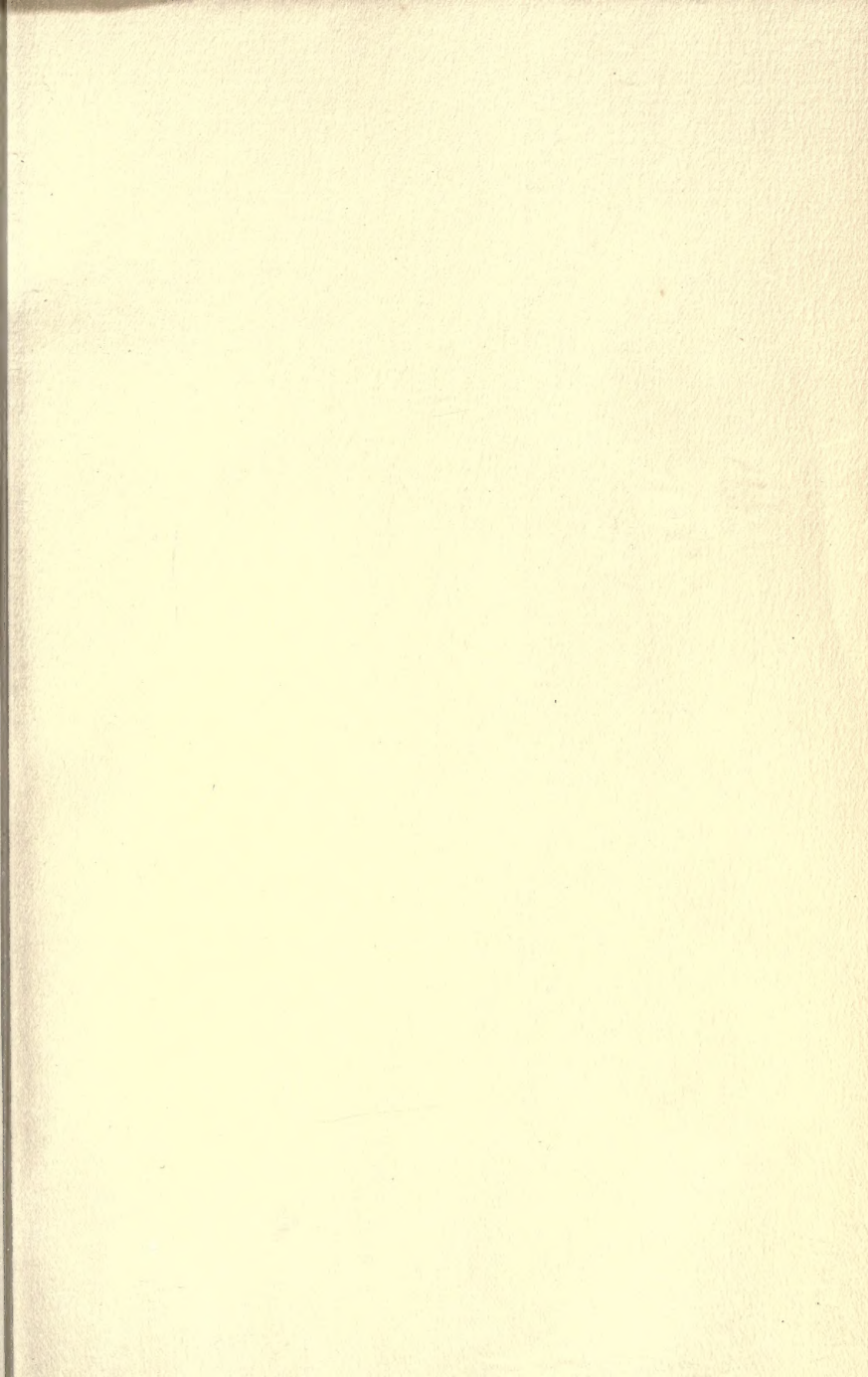
The hummings of his songs are in the air,
Nursing the timid voice of everything,

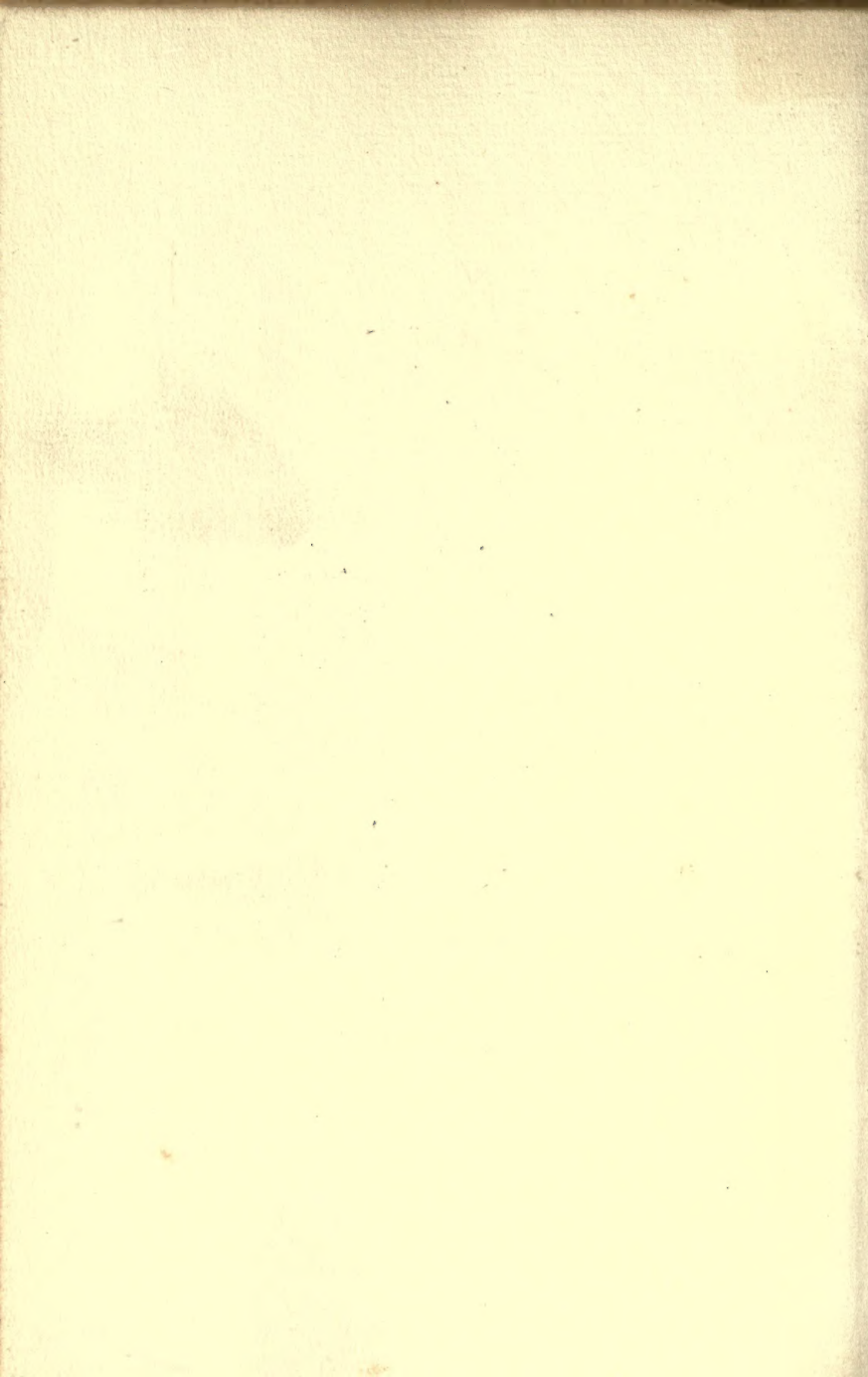
Till, in the cry of rapture or despair,
We wonder if 'tis he, or we that sing,
 There comes so full a note, so loud a strain:
And, when he wanders to the Hills again,
We take our pipes and follow too, and know—
Or think we know—more surely where we go!

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